

*Oral Questions*

example, to have his provincial equivalent take action to have charges laid? It is very pertinent.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada):** Mr. Speaker, as I have advised the House, the consultations were in the normal course of events. At least my understanding is that in fact the call came from Ontario to the federal official in question. However, I would advise my hon. friend that they were no more than the normal consultations which took place between the two officials.

## POSITION OF GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO OFFICIAL

**Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa):** Mr. Speaker, we have a matter I would suggest of considerable importance here. The Minister of Justice—and we have to accept his word in the House—should do some checking. His senior official, or someone, is telling the opposite to what the spokesperson for Ontario is saying.

The senior person representing the Government of Ontario in this matter, Mr. Hunt, has claimed that the conversation originated from Ottawa, not from Ontario, and that the person calling from the office of the Minister of Justice said he was calling on behalf of the Ministry of Finance.

Will the Minister confirm what he has just said, that the conversation did not originate in Ottawa? Does he stand by that? If he is not sure of that, would he find out and report back to the House? If it did originate from Ottawa what was the nature of that conversation?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada):** Mr. Speaker, I will endeavour to find out who made the first call. I will undertake to do that.

I can only go back to the transcript of the Canadian Press interview to which I referred earlier and in which the provincial official said that the call was no more than normal consultation. He then went on to say: "This is normal consultation to give us some of their considerations. It is ultimately up to the police whether or not they will lay the charge".

## TRANSCRIPT OF CANADIAN PRESS

**Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa):** Mr. Speaker, I have a copy of the same transcript which the Minister has. What the Minister did not read out is that when the provincial official was asked whether it was routine, he replied by saying: "You would have to ask Mr. Rutherford"—i.e. the federal official—"if it was normal procedure".

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Broadbent:** In other words, he is saying that it is the federal person who made the call, and he was implying at least that this was not a normal call.

Since the Government has not been frank from the word go, why is it that here we are at 2.30 in the afternoon and the Minister does not seem to have the facts straight yet on this important matter?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada):** Mr. Speaker, I take my hon. friend at his word that he has a transcript stating that it was on behalf of the Department of Finance. I take him on his word there.

I repeat, and it is suggested in the wire service report from which I read, that they were normal consultations which take place. At the end of the consultations—and this is the important thing—it is the RCMP that makes the ultimate decision to lay the charge.

## POSITION OF PRIME MINISTER

**Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Justice. He just said in answer to a question from the Hon. Member for York Centre that he cannot give an answer that would interfere with a fair trial.

If that is the case, then why did the Prime Minister say yesterday in this House during Question Period, speaking of the leak to Doug Small: "The evening before there had clearly been an unlawful dissemination of a very important federal document"?

I ask the Minister: How does that contribute to a fair trial for Mr. Small, or anybody?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

• (1430)

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, because of the reference, as my hon. friend will